

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO

English Use in the University of Helsinki

Perspectives of International Students

Riku Hipsi
Master's thesis
English Philology
Department of Languages
University of Helsinki
December 2019



Tiedekunta/Osasto – Fakultet/Sektion – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta / Kielten osasto		
Tekijä – Författare – Author Riku Hipsi		
Työn nimi – Arbetets titel – Title English use in the University of Helsinki: Perspectives of International Students		
Oppiaine – Läroämne – Subject Englantilainen filologia		
Työn laji – Arbetets art – Level Pro gradu	Aika – Datum – Month and year 12 / 2019	Sivumäärä– Sidoantal – Number of pages 52 + 7
<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>Tässä tutkielmassa tutkitaan kansainvälisten opiskelijoiden näkemyksiä englannin kielen käytöstä Helsingin yliopistossa. Tutkimuksessa etsitään vastausta siihen, millaista englantia opiskelijat kohtaavat opiskellessaan Helsingin yliopistossa, kuinka paljon englanninkielistä informaatiota on heidän saatavillaan ja minkälaisia odotuksia heillä on ollut liittyen yliopistossa käytettävää englantia kohtaan. Tutkimus on tehty haastattelemalla yhdeksää kansainvälistä opiskelijaa vuoden 2019 syys- ja lokakuun aikana. Haastatellut opiskelevat Helsingin yliopiston kansainvälisissä maisteriohjelmissa. Haastattelut nauhoitettiin ja litteroitiin.</p> <p>Haastatteluissa ilmeni, että haastateltavat ovat pääasiassa tyytyväisiä englannin kielen laatuun Helsingin yliopistossa, mukaan lukien englanninkielinen opetus. Haastatellut raportoivat kuitenkin joistakin kursseista ja tilanteista, joissa heillä on esimerkiksi ollut hankaluuksia saada selvää opettajan englanninkielisestä opetuksesta. Haastateltavien suurimmat haasteet Helsingin yliopistossa koskivat puutteellista englanninkielisen tiedon saatavuutta. Ongelmia ilmeni esimerkiksi sähköposteissa, yliopiston verkkosivustoilla tai muissa lähteissä, joissa tietoa on vain yksikielisesti suomeksi tai kaksikielisesti suomeksi ja ruotsiksi. Haastatteluissa osa opiskelijoista sanoi myös toivovansa, että he pystyisivät opiskelemaan useampia kursseja englannin kielellä. He kokivat saavansa riittävästi tietoa opintojensa suorittamiseen liittyen, mutta puutteet englanninkielisen tiedon tai palveluiden saatavuudessa saivat osan haastateltavista tuntemaan olevansa eri asemassa suomenkielisiin opiskelijoihin nähden.</p> <p>Haastateltavilta kysyttiin myös sitä, minkälaisia odotuksia heillä oli ollut ennen kuin he aloittivat maisterinopintonsa Helsingin yliopistossa. He olivat odottaneet kohtaavansa laadukasta englannin kieltä sekä opetuksessa, että yleisesti yliopistossa. Sen osalta opiskelijat olivat pääasiassa tyytyväisiä. Sen sijaan he olivat odottaneet, että tietoa ja palveluita olisi saatavilla nykyistä paremmin.</p>		
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords englantia lingua francana, englantia opetuskielenä, kielipolitiikka, kansainvälisyys		
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto		
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information		

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Background.....	3
2.1	English as an academic Lingua Franca.....	3
2.2	English-Medium Instruction in higher education	6
2.3	English in Finnish higher education and in the University of Helsinki	8
2.3.1	The status of English in Finnish higher education	8
2.3.2	The University of Helsinki language policy	10
2.3.3	International students in the University of Helsinki.....	11
3	Data and methods.....	14
3.1	Interviews	14
3.1.1	Informants	14
3.1.2	Interview guide.....	16
3.1.3	Transcription conventions	17
3.2	Method of analysis.....	18
3.3	Ethical considerations of the study	18
4	Analysis	20
4.1	Quality of English.....	20
4.1.1	English used by the teachers and university staff	21
4.1.2	English in online materials.....	23
4.1.3	The English of other students.....	23
4.2	Availability of English.....	24
4.2.1	Received emails	24
4.2.2	Online information	27
4.2.3	University related events and services	28
4.2.4	Availability of courses taught in English.....	30

4.2.5	The effect on perceived status of international students	33
4.3	Prior expectations about English use in the university	34
5	Discussion.....	38
5.1	Quality of English in the university.....	38
5.2	Availability of English in the university.....	39
5.3	Prior expectations	42
5.4	Implications of this study	43
5.5	Limitations of the study and possibilities for future research	46
6	Conclusion	48
	References	50
	Appendix 1 – Interview guide	53
	Appendix 2 – Privacy Notice	55
	Appendix 3 – Consent form	59

List of tables

Table 1: Student amounts in the biggest universities in Finland	12
Table 2: International Master's Programmes in UH	13
Table 3: Background information of the interviewees	16

1 Introduction

The University of Helsinki is a multilingual university, meaning that it offers education in both official languages of Finland, Finnish and Swedish, and also in English. It is an international university, which aims to be an attractive destination for both international students and researchers and participates in the development of English as an academic Lingua Franca (University of Helsinki 2014, 48). For international degree students, University of Helsinki offers 35 different International Master's Programmes, where they can study in English.

My study is about the experiences about English use in the University of Helsinki from the point of view of international students. The focus population of this thesis is students who are studying in International Master's Programmes in the University of Helsinki, who have come from other countries and who do not speak Finnish or Swedish. The study's aim is to find out how the international students manage while studying in English and what kinds of language issues they deal with in relation to their studies.

I conducted this study by interviewing nine international students who are currently studying in the University of Helsinki in an International Master's programme. I asked them about the expectations they had regarding the English language they would encounter in the university before beginning their studies and what kinds of experiences they have had when studying in English and when finding the information that they need in the university.

The research questions of my study are:

1. What kind of English do international students encounter when they study in the University of Helsinki?
2. What kinds of experiences have the international students had regarding the availability of information or services provided in English?
3. What expectations did the international students have about English in the university before entering the university and how have they been met?

Question one is mostly about what is the quality of the English that the students encounter during their studies in the University of Helsinki. It could be for example the English used by

their teachers during lectures, the language they see on the university's webpages or the English spoken by their fellow students. Question two has to do with the availability of English. The interviewees were asked about their experiences trying to get services in English and trying to find information online. Question three is about what the students expected in terms of English language use in the university before they enrolled to the programme they are studying in. This thesis aims to give a realistic idea of what it is like to study in English in the University of Helsinki's International Master's Programmes and how well their experiences about the English use in the university meet the expectations that the international students have had when applying.

The subject of student perspectives on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in higher education and English-medium instruction (EMI) has been studied before in both Europe and Asia. For example, Jensen et al. (2013) and Mortensen and Fabricius (2014) have looked at the student perspectives and attitudes in Denmark. In Taiwan, Lau and Lin (2016) have done similar research. The studies have shown that the way the international students perceive the English used in the university they are studying in has a lot of effects on their views on the quality of the education they receive and that the students need to find some ways to cope with the language environment, if there is not enough English available. The situation in the University of Helsinki has been studied by Lindström (2012), who focused on language policy, and by Hirvensalo (2012), who focused on the perspectives of teachers who teach English-medium courses. The studies mentioned above will be discussed further in chapter two.

This study will provide an insight into what the students encounter in terms of language in the University of Helsinki. It will reveal some issues that cause trouble to the students and might need further looking into. It will also discuss how the students feel about these issues. The study presents implications that will be of use when trying to understand what is important in terms of language choice and language policy from the point of view of an international student who does not speak or understand either of the local official languages of Finland.

2 Background

In this background chapter I discuss the theoretical framework of this thesis and present some of the previous research done in the field of my own study. I begin section 2.1 by discussing which definition of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) I use in this thesis. After that I will discuss some studies done about ELF in academic settings, specifically as a language of internationalization. In section 2.2, I present the concept of English-medium instruction (EMI) in higher education and some studies that have focused on EMI in ELF settings. Section 2.3 is about the background of English in Finnish higher-education.

2.1 English as an academic Lingua Franca

The context of my study is largely related to the concept of English as Lingua Franca. Lingua franca is often defined as a contact language that is used in communication between people who do not share a first language (Mauranen 2017, 7). English has gained status as a global lingua franca used all around the world, even in areas where it is not the domestic language (Mauranen 2017, 7). There are two definitions of ELF. One definition excludes native speakers from the people it applies to, meaning that ELF only applies to contexts where there are no native speakers present and English is used as a language that two non-native speakers both speak as a second language (Mauranen 2017, 7). The other definition one includes the native speakers, meaning that it considers ELF to apply to every situation where English is used as the language of communication and where it is a second language to at least one of the users (Mauranen 2017, 7). Like Mauranen, I will also be using the latter definition. An important thing to consider is that even though native speakers are not excluded from this definition, it does not mean that the English they use in ELF settings is necessarily the same as their native English. Some ELF scholars suggest that ELF is a language that even the native speakers have acquired by having to adapt their language use in order to communicate efficiently with non-native speakers (Jenkins 2011, 928).

The context of my study is also tied to the concept of internationalization, which has become an important part of European higher education (Smit 2010, 16). Universities and other institutes providing tertiary education are providing education for foreign students, motivated by the Bologna Process, which has unified the formal standards and quality of higher education (Smit 2010, 16-17). When offering education to a multinational and multilingual set of students, universities need to decide what language they use as the medium of instruction

in their international programmes. The need to remain competitive in the academic world has created a demand for an academic Lingua Franca that would allow the universities to gain and spread information across borders (Faber 2010). A lot of the universities have decided to use a Lingua Franca that is common to most of their students (Smit 2010). As English is already a global Lingua Franca that is used in international business and scientific research, the internationalization of universities has led to many universities using English as either the main or the only Lingua Franca, even in situations where the native speakers of English are a minority or not present at all (Faber 2010; Jenkins 2011).

Using a language that is not the mother tongue of the majority of teachers or students in the organisation providing higher education offers a wide variety of possible topics and research questions for applied linguistics studies. Previous research has been done about topics like language regulation and practises, for example Ljostad (2014), and what strategies are used to communicate effectively in the academic environment, for example Björkman (2011). Because the focus of my thesis is on the student perspectives, the studies I have decided to present in this section are also about the way students in international programmes taught mainly in English.

For example, Mortensen and Fabricius (2014) studied Danish students' perspectives on English as an Academic Lingua Franca. Their study was a qualitative interview study about the ideologies held by four students studying in an international bachelor's level programme, focusing on the different forms of English. Two of the students were locals, meaning that they had a Danish background, and two were from other countries, Norway and Spain. Mortensen and Fabricius found that a recurring theme in all of their interviews was competence in English. Instead of being concerned about what kind of accent the lecturers had, the students were more concerned with the effectiveness of the lecturers' English, as in being able to be clear and having a satisfactory proficiency in order to communicate effortlessly (Mortensen & Fabricius 2014, 201-203). The students held an idea of some kinds of 'standardized' forms of English, meaning UK or US variants of the language, which they considered to be higher in status than non-native variants (Mortensen & Fabricius 2014, 209). However, they also felt that sometimes the native forms of English were harder to understand than non-native ones and that in a Lingua Franca context it would sometimes be more effective to use a non-native one, because they are often slower in pace and more simplified (Mortensen & Fabricius 2014, 210-217). What also came up is that some may consider it to be in some way inappropriate or

pretentious for a non-native user to use a native-sounding accent without having acquired it by living in the country connected to that accent (Mortensen & Fabricius 2014, 218).

As mentioned before, English has become the academic Lingua Franca globally. Thus, it not used as the language of internationalization only in Europe, but around the world. There have been many studies conducted in Asian universities that use English as a language of internationalization, such as Lau and Lin (2016). They studied ELF in a Taiwanese university that promotes itself as being international and bilingual, offering education in Mandarin Chinese and English. Mandarin Chinese has long been the main language of instruction in Taiwanese higher education and its status in local academia there is well established (Lau & Lin 2016, 440). Still, English has gained recognition as an academic Lingua Franca (Lau & Lin 2016, 440). Lau and Lin interviewed international students from Yuan Ze University (YZU), which is the first bilingual university in Taiwan, in order to find out how the international students were integrated into the university and how they react to the university's language environment (Lau & Lin 2016). Some of the international students in their study brought up issues of the lecturers opting out of using English as the medium of instruction (Lau & Lin 2016). In addition to the language of instruction often being Mandarin instead of English, Lau and Lin's previous research in the same university had shown that the international students also had issues integrating socially with the local student community, because the language of socialization in most events and social gatherings was Mandarin (Lau & Lin 2014 as cited in Lau & Lin 2016). Many of the students in their study had tried to cope with the situation by getting translation help from other students or by obtaining individual consultations from faculty members, whereas some of the students had opted to use a more passive or even avoidance strategy, where they only participated in courses that were taught in English. The results of the study indicate that YZU's bilingual language policy had not yet resulted in the kind of language environment that the international students had expected, but instead of fixing the issues, everyone seemed to be trying to work around them (Lau & Lin 2016).

As can be seen from the results of the above presented studies, the English use that the students encounter in the university while studying in that language can have effects on both their studies and also their social life. I will present the way these issues came up in the interviews that I conducted in chapter four.

2.2 English-Medium Instruction in higher education

Simply put, English-medium instruction (EMI) means the use of English as a language of instruction. In international settings of EMI, English is used as the Lingua Franca between the teacher and the students, in order to communicate in a language that is common to everyone. It is important to note that EMI is a part of the ELF context, not EFL (English as a Foreign Language). EFL is a concept that focuses on acquiring English as a second language and therefore the concept is focused on language learning rather than language use. Another concept that is close to EMI is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). CLIL is “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (Marsh & Frigols Martín 2012, 1). The language used as the medium of instruction can be any language that is not the L1 of the students, so it is not restricted to learning in English. EMI differs from the concept of CLIL in the sense that even though both of them aim to teach the content in the target language, EMI as a concept does not have an objective of teaching the language simultaneously (Murata & Iino 2017, 403).

For my study, I am mostly interested in how the students perceive and respond to the English that is used by the teachers in the English-medium courses. One example of such study is Jensen et al. (2013). They studied Danish university students’ attitudes about English as an academic Lingua Franca in EMI courses. Jensen et al.’s research focused on how much the teachers’ English skills in EMI courses affected the students’ perception of their general lecturing competence and also how the general lecturing competence of the teachers affected the students’ perception of their English skills. They researched it by having the students fill out questionnaires after 31 lectures (Jensen et al. 2013). The questionnaire consisted of four parts, where the students had to answer how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements presented. The first part had statements about the general appeal of the lecture or its topic, the second about the structure of the lecture, the third about the general lecturing competence of the teacher and the fourth about the English language proficiency of the teacher. What their results revealed was that when the students rated the teachers’ general competence as being low, they also evaluated their English skills to be low, meaning that there was a correlation between the students’ perception of the teachers’ general lecturing competence and the students’ perception of the teachers’ proficiency in English (Jensen et al 2013). This suggests that in an academic ELF context, if the students perceive that their

teachers' competence level is low, they are more likely to find faults in their English skills. Moreover, it suggests that the perceived quality of education can be dependent on the language proficiency of the teachers, which is an even more relevant result from the perspective of my study.

The use of EMI in higher education has also been studied by Björkman (2013). As a part of her research, Björkman had Swedish university students in EMI-courses fill out a survey about comprehensibility and irritation relating to non-standard use of spoken English. When using the word comprehensibility she refers to understanding the meaning of the speech and when using the word irritation she means "the listener-friendliness of a particular feature and attitudes towards it" (Björkman 2013, 64). She found that some students were irritated by non-standard speech, while others were more focused on the content of the speech (Björkman 2013, 139). In Björkman's study, 'non-standard' refers to what would be considered 'incorrect' in prescriptive grammar books, which is not synonymous with 'non-native' (Björkman 2013, 63). Some of those who got irritated reported that they were able to comprehend what was being said, but that the mistakes made were annoying them, while others reported sometimes having problems because they have to focus too much on what the professors are saying (Björkman 2013, 139). The students who were not that annoyed reported that they cared more about the subject matter at hand rather than the correctness of the speaker's language, which means that they were happy as long as they were able to comprehend the speech (Björkman 2013, 139).

Taking into account the results from the studies by Jensen et al. (2013) and Björkman (2013), the teachers' English skills can have an effect on how the students perceive the English-medium education that they receive. Both studies suggest that the quality of English in EMI courses can cause the students to be less pleased or less convinced about the quality of the education that they receive. However, Björkman's study also suggests that as long as they are able to understand what is being taught without too much effort, the students usually focus more on the effectiveness of the teachers' English use than on the correctness.

As mentioned in the above section, Lau and Lin (2016) found that according to the students that were interviewed, some lecturers only had their PowerPoint-presentations and other course materials in English, while still choosing to give the lectures in Mandarin (Lau & Lin 2016). Some interviewees suggested that this happened when the students who did not speak Mandarin were a clear minority (Lau & Lin 2016). Even though English was recognized as

having status as an academic Lingua Franca, according to Lau and Lin's study it was used only when it seemed to be needed and the de facto language of instruction in the lectures was still Mandarin. Lau and Lin suspect that the teachers were probably not used to using English in scientific discourse and were afraid of embarrassing themselves (Lau & Lin 2016).

The studies above and in the previous section suggest that the students are usually most concerned about being able to understand what the teacher is trying to teach and that the teacher is able to effectively teach the subject. This means that the students do not care that much about whether or not the teachers speak some kind of idealized version of English, as long as the message is conveyed effectively. These attitudes were also present in my interviews, which are analysed in chapter four and discussed in chapter five. Yet, sometimes it might seem that the teachers themselves are not confident enough in their own English skills to use it when they should, as suggested by Lau and Lin's study above (Lau & Lin 2016). Some interviewees in my study suggested that some issues that they have witnessed in the University of Helsinki might also be due to the teacher's lack of confidence in their own English skills.

2.3 English in Finnish higher education and in the University of Helsinki

In this final section of my background chapter, I discuss English in Finnish higher education and in the University of Helsinki. This section has been divided into three parts. In the first part I present the background and development of internationalization and English-medium education in Finland in general. In the second part I discuss the University of Helsinki Language Policy. Lastly, in the third part of the section, I present how much international students there are in the University of Helsinki, how it compares among the biggest Finnish universities and what International Master's Programmes are running in the University of Helsinki.

2.3.1 The status of English in Finnish higher education

In Finnish higher education, even when the language policies of some institutions only mention foreign languages without specifying which, English is used as the language of internationalisation (Saarinen & Nikula 2013, 15). In the context of international degree programmes, English seems to be taken for granted as the language of choice for education and for communication between multilingual and multicultural students and staff members (Saarinen & Nikula 2013, 15). English also works in the role of gatekeeper, as many entrance

examinations to different fields of higher education require and test the applicants' English skills in some way during the application process (Saarinen & Nikula 2013, 15). It is noteworthy that in many university programmes that require the applicants to pass a standardised test to prove that their level of English is sufficient, applicants who have a bachelor's degree in English from a European Union or European Economic area country are exempted from taking the test (Saarinen & Nikula 2013, 13-14). Some programmes also exempt applicants who have a degree that has been carried out in English in any of the Nordic countries, as they consider those studies as sufficient evidence that the applicant is able to cope in studies that require English skills (Saarinen & Nikula 2013, 13-14). It can thus be concluded that Finnish educational institutions consider European and Nordic education to have high enough standards for English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI).

In her article, Saarinen (2014) examines the development of language policies in Finnish higher education from a historical and contemporary perspective. According to the article, a new era of Finnish higher education policies emerged in the 1980s, a part of which was a more structured policy of internationalization (Saarinen 2014, 132). International study programmes have been set up since the early 1990s and even though some programmes offered education in German and in French, English became the only language of internationalization in practice and has remained so ever since (Saarinen 2014, 133). Since the 1990s and especially after the 2004 amendment of the University Act in Finland, English has been used increasingly in Finnish higher education (Saarinen 2014, 35).

As for example Airey et al. (2015) note, there has been an increasing trend of EMI in higher education over the last 15-20 years. However, looking at the historical context, English has been the language of internationalization for much longer in Finnish universities (Saarinen 2014, 130). Saarinen states that as German lost its position as the language of internationalization during and after the Second World War, English took its place. Saarinen explains the change with many factors, for example with the active foreign policy of the USA and the promotion of English as the language of internationalization (Saarinen 2014, 132). According to Saarinen (2014), as Finnish higher education has internationalized, international study programmes have been a significant part of the said internationalization. Saarinen notes that currently English stands as the only language in the international degree programmes in Finland, in practice (Saarinen 2014, 132-133). A report published in 2013 by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council shows that in 2012 there were 257 international degree

programmes in Finnish universities, out of which 98% were master level programmes (Välimaa et al. 2013).

In Finland, some people have expressed concern over the fact that the universities have started teaching in English. Their concern is that English would replace Finnish as an academic language. However, in a survey study conducted by Leppänen et al. (2009), the majority of the informants did not consider it likely that the language of education in the universities would end up being solely English, even though they thought that English would grow in significance in general in Finland.

2.3.2 The University of Helsinki language policy

The University of Helsinki has published its language policy as a public document, which can be accessed online. It portrays the university as a trilingual university, which provides education and does research in Finnish, Swedish and English. The policy states that the university “maintains and develops an active and functional bilingual policy”, saying that the university wants to offer Swedish language education that serves the bilingual labour market and that it wants to uphold the status of Finnish as an academic language (University of Helsinki 2014, 49). There is also a sub-chapter about the status of English in the university, stating that the use of English is not in conflict with the status of the national languages and that it is used to create an environment that supports the internationalisation of the university (University of Helsinki 2014, 49). The university is still able to hire people who do not speak either of the national languages, if their position does not require them to use Finnish or Swedish in their work (University of Helsinki 2014, 49). In the language policy it is also stated that the teachers who teach courses in English as well as the students who study in English-medium programmes will be offered language and communication support in order to be able to work and study in a multicultural environment (University of Helsinki 2014, 55).

Lindström (2012) has studied the language policies and practices in the University of Helsinki from the point of view of both local and international multilingualism, mapping out the roles of Finnish, Swedish and English as perceived by the students and staff members of the university. His findings suggest that even though the university’s language policy states that the university should be trilingual, offering services and information in the local languages of Finnish and Swedish as well as in English, Finnish is still the language that is the most dominantly used most contexts (Lindström 2012, 50-51). Due to issues such as the lack of

command of other languages, Finnish becomes the language of choice in many situations, even though the role of Finnish has diminished in the fields of research, Master's level teaching and course literature (Lindström 2012, 50-51). Lindström suggests that the role of English in the University of Helsinki is going to be more stable in the future, because of its role as the language of science and internationalisation (Lindström 2012, 51).

As a part of her research about teachers' attitudes towards teaching in English, Hirvensalo (2012) also studied how their views compared to those of the 2007 edition of the University of Helsinki's Language Policy. She found that the teachers interviewed were not familiar with the policy and the knowledge that they had about it was mainly limited to the role of Finland's national languages (Hirvensalo 2012, 31-33). Even though the policy stated that "the University of Helsinki has to be an attractive option for foreign students, teachers and researchers" and that multiculturalism and multilingualism "are a source of enrichment", the one foreign teacher interviewed in this study said that the university was still "a bit behind" from those goals. She suggested that the fact that she did not speak Finnish affected her status in the organization and that there were still considerable inequalities between the Finnish and the foreign staff (Hirvensalo 2012, 36).

2.3.3 International students in the University of Helsinki

In this section I will discuss how many international degree students there are in the University of Helsinki and what kind of International Master's Programmes there are in the University of Helsinki.

In 2018 the University of Helsinki had 31 200 degree students, 1 850 of which were international students (University of Helsinki 2019a). To give some perspective on those numbers, the amount of degree students with the international students separated in the seven biggest Finnish universities in 2018 can be found in Table 1 below.

University (Location)	Degree students	International degree students	% of all students
University of Helsinki (Helsinki)	31 200	1 850	5,9 %
University of Turku (Turku, Pori)	20 185	1 664	8,2 %
University of Eastern Finland (Joensuu and Kuopio)	15 632	1 196	7,7 %
University of Jyväskylä (Jyväskylä)	15 000	1 300	8,7 %
University of Oulu (Oulu)	13 000	1 015	7,8 %
Aalto University (Espoo and Helsinki)	10 881	1 524	14,0 %
Tampere University (Tampere, Pori and Seinäjoki)	9 656	638	6,6 %

Table 1: Student amounts in the biggest universities in Finland (Aalto University 2019; Tampere University 2019; University of Eastern Finland 2019; University of Helsinki 2019a; University of Jyväskylä 2019; University of Turku 2019; University of Oulu 2019)

Compared to the other universities in Finland, the University of Helsinki has the most international degree students in total, but the amount of international degree students in relation to the degree students in total are bigger in all of the other universities presented in the table. The amount of international degree students is typically under 10 per cent of the whole student population, with the exception of Aalto University.

Currently in the University of Helsinki there are 35 active International Master's Programmes, where students can get education in English. The programmes are listed in Table 2. The table contains all of the faculties in the University of Helsinki and under each faculty are listed the different International Master's Programmes that are operated in that faculty. The Master's Programme in Urban Studies and Planning can be found under multiple Faculties, because it is interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral (University of Helsinki 2019b). It is also a joint programme with Aalto University (marked with * in Table 2). The Master's Programme in Economics is a joint programme with Aalto University and Hanken School of Economics (marked with ** in Table 2). The programmes that are bolded in the table are the ones where the interviewees of this thesis are studying in.

<u>Faculty</u>	<u>Master's programme(s)</u>
Arts	English studies Intercultural encounters Linguistic diversity and digital humanities Russian studies Urban studies and planning*
Agriculture and Forestry	Agricultural sciences Agricultural, environmental and resource economics Atmospheric sciences Food sciences Forest sciences Human nutrition and food-related behaviour Microbiology and microbial biotechnology
Biological and Environmental sciences	Ecology and evolutionary biology Genetics and molecular biosciences Integrative plant sciences Neuroscience Urban studies and planning*
Educational Sciences	Changing education
Law	Global governance law International business law
Medicine	Translational medicine
Pharmacy	-
Science	Atmospheric science Chemistry and molecular science Computer science Data science Geography Geology and geophysics Life science informatics Materials research Mathematics and statistics Particle physics and astrophysical science Theoretical and computational methods Urban studies and planning*
Social Sciences	Contemporary societies Economics** Environmental change and Global sustainability European and Nordic studies Global politics and communication Urban studies and planning*
Theology	-
Veteniary Medicine	-
Swedish School of Social Science	-

Table 2: International Master's Programmes in the University of Helsinki (University of Helsinki 2019c)

3 Data and methods

In this chapter I will present how I collected the data for my research. My data was based on qualitative interviews, which I talk about in section 3.1. I go through how the interview guide was prepared and what it contains in section 3.1.1 and what kind of informants I had and how they were recruited in 3.1.2. Also, I present the method I used to analyse the data in 3.2. In section 3.3 I discuss the ethical considerations of this thesis.

3.1 Interviews

For the research I collected my data by doing qualitative interviews. Conducting interviews is the most commonly used method of qualitative inquiries (Dörnyei 2007, 134). I chose the method of interview as I felt that one-on-one discussions with informants would provide more thorough answers than for example an online questionnaire, and also during an interview there is an opportunity to ask the informant for further explanation or comments.

My interviews were semi-structured, meaning that I used a pre-written interview guide when interviewing the participants, but the conversation was not strictly tied to it and even though the same topics were discussed in every interview in one way or another, they did not always follow exactly the same pattern. Sometimes I left out or altered some of the questions that were on the interview guide because of how the conversations developed and sometimes I asked questions that were not on the interview guide in order to get the participants to elaborate on the topics that they were talking about.

I recorded the interviews with a recorder and then transcribed them into textual format on a computer. The interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes each, the shortest one being 16 minutes and the longest one being 26 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Helsinki on the University of Helsinki's premises.

3.1.1 Informants

The target population of the study was international students studying in the International Master's programmes in the University of Helsinki. I recruited students by sending e-mail messages to mailing lists that reach the international students studying in those programmes. I started by contacting people who work for the programmes as education coordinators or as directors of the Master's programme via email, asking them if their programmes have such

mailing lists and if I could either send an invitation to them myself or if they would forward my message. I also sent the same request to the student services on different campuses. I was able to send the invitation to participate in my interview to the mailing lists of seven different master's programmes.

Because the interviews were anonymous I do not refer to the interviewees with their names. I will call them Student 1, Student 2, Student 3 and so on. In order to save space, I will use the abbreviations S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8 and S9 in the rest of the paper. My criteria for the informants was that they were currently studying in an International Master's Programme in the University of Helsinki, that they were international students, meaning that they had come from somewhere else than Finland, and that they did not speak any Finnish or Swedish. I decided not to include exchange students. Even though the exchange students will certainly observe some of the same issues as the degree students, they do not complete their whole degree in the University of Helsinki. Because they only spend a short period of time in Helsinki and are possibly only interested in completing a few courses there, the exchange students might not pay as much attention to the issues or they might not be bothered by them. When I was planning my research, I planned to get at least five informants for my study. I was able to recruit nine students from five different International Master's programmes to participate in my study, thus exceeding the goal that I had set for myself. Background information on the participants is presented in table 3.

Interviewee	Mother tongue	Master's Programme	Faculty	Year of study
Student 1	German	International Business Law	Faculty of Law	Second
Student 2	Russian	International Business Law	Faculty of Law	First
Student 3	English	Mathematics and Statistics	Faculty of Science	Second
Student 4	Italian	Intercultural Encounters	Faculty of Arts	Second
Student 5	Russian/Mari	Contemporary Societies	Faculty of Social Sciences	First
Student 6	Spanish	Intercultural Encounters	Faculty of Arts	Second
Student 7	Italian	Intercultural Encounters	Faculty of Arts	First
Student 8	English	Agricultural, Environmental and Resource Economics	Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry	Second
Student 9	English	Contemporary Societies	Faculty of Social Sciences	Second

Table 3: Background information on the interviewees

Three of the students had just started their first year in the Master's programme and six were second year students. The programmes that the participants were from were the programme in Agricultural, Environmental and Resource Economics (Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry), the programme in Contemporary Societies (Faculty of Social Sciences), the programme in Intercultural Encounters (Faculty of Arts), the programme in International Business Law from the Faculty of Law and the programme in Mathematics and Statistics (Faculty of Science). After receiving multiple messages from students who were interested in participating in my study, I arranged meetings with the ones that I decided to interview. I decided to exclude some who had contacted me, for reasons such as them being exchange students, them speaking either Finnish or Swedish fluently or them having spent extended periods in Helsinki in the recent past or having studied and completed their previous degrees in the University of Helsinki. I decided to exclude the students that fell under the last two descriptions, because their experiences and expectations would likely differ a lot from the students that are the main interest of this thesis.

3.1.2 Interview guide

During the interviews, I used an interview guide to support the semi-structured interviewing method, in which I covered the same topics with all of the interviewees. The interview guide consisted of 15 questions. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix 1. Some of the

questions were short questions that I asked in order to get some information about the interviewees' background, whereas some were longer and had supporting additional questions. The questions were not specifically divided into different sections, but the first six questions are about the background of the interviewees, the following six questions are about the experiences and prior expectations of the interviewees and the last three are there in order to get the interviewees to summarize their thoughts and to bring out things that might not get covered in the earlier parts of the interviews. As the interviews were semi-structured, it meant that I did not follow the interview guide completely and the questions I asked and the way I asked them varied. The interviews were conversational in format, which meant that the interviewees were able to elaborate on their thoughts if they wanted to and I was able to either add or leave out questions if I felt like it was necessary. Some questions were left out from some interviews because I felt that the topic was already covered in what the interviewee had said before that question was asked. I also asked some questions that were not on the interview guide if I felt that there was something that I wanted the interviewees to elaborate on.

3.1.3 Transcription conventions

In the transcriptions I used the following transcription conventions:

(.)	short pause
(...)	long pause
---	omission
@	laughter
<u>word</u>	stressed word
[word]	transcriber's notes

The main purpose of the study is to present and analyse the experiences of the interviewees. I transcribed the interviews with that as the main focus, which is why they were not transcribed with the same precision that would be used in a linguistic study that focuses on the smaller details of their speech. In practice this means that I did not mark all of the pauses in the interviewees' speech, I left out speech disfluencies such as false starts and non-lexical

utterances, and that I sometimes corrected some minor grammatical mistakes that the interviewees made, in order to make the quotes more readable. My main priority is to present the message that the interviewees were trying to convey in their speech as clearly as possible without changing the meaning of what they said.

3.2 Method of analysis

For the analysis of the interview data that I gathered, I use qualitative content analysis in an inductive manner. Dörnyei (2007, 246) divides this type of analysis, which he calls ‘latent content analysis’ into four phases: transcribing the data, pre-coding and coding, growing ideas and interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. Transcribing is the transformation of recorded data into textual form. Coding is dividing the data into categories in order to identify the key features and relationships in the data (Richards 2003, 273).

After I had conducted the interviews, I transcribed the recordings into textual form on my computer. After the transcription process was done, I marked the parts that I thought would be useful information to be analysed more closely. After that I took note of what kinds of things the interviewees themselves gave the most focus on, how they were related and what things came up repeatedly in the interviews. Based on those notes, I categorized them in order to be able to see what factors in the data seemed to be most important from the point of view of the interviewees and also what the relationships between them were. From those categories I was able to get an understanding of what kinds of things arose from the data as the most prevalent and how the different interviews connected into a whole.

After transcribing the recordings, I marked the parts that were relevant to my research questions. Then I collected the relevant parts of the transcriptions into a single file that I divided into different parts. That way I was able to see how the answers that the interviewees gave were related to each other and to compare their experiences, thoughts and opinions about certain subjects that were repeated in multiple interviews.

3.3 Ethical considerations of the study

Even though I did not collect any data that could be considered as sensitive information about the participants, all of the nine interviews are anonymous. This means that even though I asked the interviewees about their background, all of the personal information, such as names and other personally-identifying information on the interviewees, is left out of the

transcriptions and will not be presented in this thesis. Furthermore, because the gender of the informants is not a relevant factor in this study, I will not reveal that information. To do that, I will use 'they' as a singular pronoun even when I am referring to a singular informant, instead of using 'he' or 'she'.

The interviews were recorded with an audio-recording device and transferred to a password protected device. After the research has been completed the interview data will be destroyed. Prior to the interviews, I presented a privacy notice that has been written in accordance to the European Union General Data Protection Regulation Art. 12-14 to the informants. It contains information on the personal data that will be processed, the source of the data and how the data will be used in the study (Appendix 2). All of the interviewees also signed a consent form (Appendix 3). By doing that, they consented to participate in the interviews and that they understand their rights relating to the study. The interviewees were given both documents to read before signing the consent form, so that they would not miss anything that could be an issue for them. Also, if the interviewees themselves did not suggest a place where they would want to meet for the interview, I usually arranged a room for us where we could talk in peace.

The ethical considerations of this study are not limited to the rights of the interviewees. Some of the interviewees talked about specific people who study or work in the university. To avoid presenting anyone in an unfair manner, I have also decided to anonymize the people mentioned in the interviews. The issues brought up will still be discussed, but in a manner that leaves out the identity of any individuals.

4 Analysis

This chapter contains the analysis of the interview data that I gathered. I have divided this chapter into sub-chapters, based on the categorization that I had created during the coding phase of my analysis. I present the analysis in the order of my research questions from chapter one.

In section 4.1 I present what the interviewees talked about in relation to my first research question about the quality of English used in the University of Helsinki. The section is divided by the different contexts and users of English. I discuss the themes related to my second research question in section 4.2. There I talk about the issues regarding the availability of English that came up most saliently during the interviews and how they perceive it as a marker of their status in the University of Helsinki. I finish the chapter with section 4.3, in which I talk about what the interviewees about the English use in the university had been prior to enrolling to the University of Helsinki and how they feel those expectations have been met.

When comparing the different accounts given by the interviewees, I noticed a slight difference in the experiences of the students. The first-year students were mostly focusing on more everyday things like received emails or some webpages that they have not found available in English, whereas the second year students had a tendency to talk in more general level, like the quality of English used by the teachers or the general availability of information in English.

4.1 Quality of English

All of the participants considered the overall quality of English throughout the university to be good, even though some of them mentioned some individual issues, which will be discussed in this section. Most of the students were happy with the quality of English that the staff members communicated with, which I talk about in section 4.1.1. In section 4.1.2 I will talk about the quality of English online. The English used by the other students is talked about in 4.1.3.

4.1.1 English used by the teachers and university staff

None of the students that I interviewed mentioned having any big problems in regard to the understandability of English at the university from the point of view of quality. However, there have been some issues, as presented in example 1, where S4 talks about their experience with a porter in the university's main building.

- (1) S4: There was this guard [porter] in the main building, like the old one. And then I needed to ask something but then, he couldn't really (.) I could feel that he was really uncomfortable with English, but he couldn't really do anything else. But still he was able to help me. (---) I don't really have any trouble. I've always been able to handle everything.

S4 does not feel that there would have been any situation where they would not have been able to communicate in English, even though there have been situations like the one that they talk about in the example. S4 mentions that they can notice people being uncomfortable using English sometimes. Still, they have been able to handle every situation. S4 said in the interview that if there have been people who have not been comfortable using English, S4 always tries to "meet them [people they talk to] half-way", meaning that they act politely and try to help them with the Finnish that they know.

In example 2, S4 describes their difficulties following and using the English that was used in their programme, but it was not because of the quality of English, rather the fact that S4 was not used to studying and discussing about those subjects in English, and therefore the subject specific vocabulary was unfamiliar.

- (2) S4: I think I was a bit struggling at the beginning. My programme is like really related to theoretical knowledge, so it was kind of hard for me to get into that language. (---) It was really hard for me to follow some times, because it was really specific knowledge. (---) Because of the topic, it was like really specific and philosophical sometimes and sometimes it was really hard for me to face that.

The quality of English used by the people who teach at the university was considered to be either good or very good by almost all of the interviewees and the rest considered it to be at least sufficient for the most part, meaning that there were no complaints in that regard. Some of the people who teach the courses have come from English speaking countries, as in the case of S1 who said that most of their teachers are not Finnish and that many of them are from the United Kingdom (see example 3 below). S6 also mentioned that most of the teachers had received education in an English-speaking country (example 4).

- (3) S1: Well most of my teachers are not Finnish. So actually most of them who I've talked with were from the UK. And that is easy. @@

- (4) S6: The teachers in general, they have a very good level of English. Most of them have been trained, either in the US or the UK. So, that is fine.

In the cases where the teacher is a native English speaker, it is not surprising that the students would consider them to have good English skills. Also, if the teachers have spent considerable time in an English-speaking country, it is to be expected that they are able to communicate in English at least well enough to be able to teach the course contents in English.

S7 mentions that there is one teacher whose English is difficult to understand, but that they have not had any trouble with anyone else from the teaching staff. S7 felt that their problem with that one teacher is not about not being able to understand what the teacher is saying. The main issue is that S7 needs to focus on what is being said so much that it is hard to make notes at the same time (example 5).

- (5) S7: There is a teacher (...) whose English is a little bit hard to understand. I'm not one to judge, because it's not her first language and it's not my first language. But it's not quite as polished as the other teachers. Other than that, all the other teachers are perfect. (---) In the classroom, the course taught by this one teacher I mentioned. For me, specifically, it's very hard to keep focused, because it's just too much effort. I need to take notes of what she is saying but at the same time decode what she is saying. It's just tricky and takes too much time, so it's hard to take notes in her class.

S8 states that there is some variation between teachers. S8 also says that there have not been any instances where they would not have understood the course contents or could not have found a solution to something they needed to take care of. S8 talked more about the quality of English used by the teaching staff being sufficiently good, as presented in example 6.

- (6) S8: I think most of them [teachers] are non-native English speakers but again, I don't think, whatever conversations I do have with them, it's pretty fluent. Fluent enough for my purposes anyway. @ (---) even if staff members aren't fluent, their communication is pretty easy.

S8 continued that this applies to both spoken and written English, so even the emails that S8 receives are written well enough for them to understand everything. S8 even said that they “do not feel like they are studying in a place where English is not the native language “. When talking about the quality of English S9 said that most of the Finnish students in their programme were near fluent and that most of the teaching staff in their programme as well. But they did have some issues when attending courses that are not administered by their own programme (example 7).

- (7) S9: (---) it's when we take classes from outside of the programme, where the teaching instruction language will be English that it's not always very good English. And I think in some cases it's mitigated, because the slides will be in English or the materials will be in English so it's totally fine. But in some cases I think it can be quite difficult to understand what's going on.

Overall, the native English speakers that were interviewed seemed to be mostly happy with the proficiency of almost everyone's English skills. S3 said that it would be hard for anyone to find anything to complain about in regard to anyone's English and S8 even said that they sometimes forget that they are not in a country where English is an official language. As discussed above, S9 did have some issues with certain teachers, but even they considered most of the people at the university to be fluent, with some exceptions.

4.1.2 English in online materials

Both S2 and S6 expressed that they often spot some issues in the English texts they read online, like S2 says in example 8.

- (8) S2: I don't really have any complaints. There are on the university websites, sometimes there might be something incoherent, might be a mistake here and there. Regarding English, there might be some substantive stuff or maybe grammatical mistake.

S2 and S6 mention that there have been some texts where they would have written some words differently or where they have spotted some grammatical mistakes but both of them said that it is understandable that the language is not always flawless. S2 also mentioned that they have a knack of finding and pointing out such mistakes and that they have seen such mistakes occurring frequently even in texts written by people whose mother tongue is English. S6 presents their point of view in example 9.

- (9) S6: I think that the standard is good. Considering that this is not an English speaking country, officially. It's good, yeah. You can always find mistakes, but it's fine. (---) You always find little mistakes, there's things that you might have written in a different way, but it's fine.

As seen in the example, S6 considers the mistakes they have found to be small and not that relevant and that the standard of English is good considering that Finland is not a country where English is a national language. They repeatedly mention that the English is 'good' or that it is 'fine' even with the mistakes.

4.1.3 The English of other students

In some of the interviews, the students mentioned how they viewed the English of other students, like in example 10.

- (10) S6: But I was suspecting that the writing skill of the Finnish students (.) they were going to be better. (---) So (...) when I work with students who are native English speakers, of course they have very good use of writing skills, but then with Finnish students (.) they speak really well. Really well. But the writing thing it's something that (...) needs to have some (...) improvement.

S6 also mentioned students from other Nordic countries, who according to them speak and write at a higher level than the Finnish students. S6 has a background of writing academic texts in English and they mention that it might have an effect on their point of view. S6 still feels that there should be more courses dedicated to developing the student's academic writing skills in English. In addition to S6, S7 also mentioned other students' English skills, because they have had experiences doing group work with students who are not very fluent in English and they feel that it has slowed down the working of the whole group. On the other hand, some students had only had positive reactions to the English of other students. S9 had only good things to say about the Finnish students in their programme. According to S9, a lot of the students in their programme are from Finland. Also according to S9, most of the Finnish students have completed their previous degrees in English, which S9 thinks partly explains their fluency in the language.

4.2 Availability of English

Even though most participants said that all of the essential information is usually provided in English, the most salient issues that came up in the interviews were about the availability of information in English. This came up especially when talking about online contexts.

4.2.1 Received emails

During the interviews one thing that came up in many interviews was emails that the students receive that might concern them but are only in Finnish and/or Swedish. S1 mentions this in example 11.

- (11) S1: The International Business Law programme basically has its own email contact, but then we are also a part of the Faculty of Law and most of the time the Faculty of Law emails are not available in English

According to S1 the issue is repeated with every email concerning the whole faculty. The same issue was brought up by S2, who is studying in the same programme, and S4. Examples 12 and 13 are from their comments.

(12) S2: Well there is the problem that some information is sent only in Finnish and in Swedish, like some faculty related stuff to my personal email, which (...) which I don't mind, but that's (.) I can't really use this information.

(13) S4: (---) quite many emails from the university are only in Finnish. And now I've decided that I just delete them, I don't even try to read them. Sometimes I think that I might like lose some important information so I cannot really (...) Sometimes I just think it's stupid to even stress about them, because I do not have time to translate everything, so I just delete them.

I asked S1 and S2 whether they have tried to work around the matter in order to understand what the emails contain. Their approaches differed, as S1 has tried to understand the messages, whereas S2 has trusted that if there is important information, it will reach them, as illustrated in examples 14 and 15.

(14) S1: Well the good thing is that it is available in Swedish, so I do understand some of the things. And even though Google Translate does not work with Finnish, it works pretty well with Swedish. @@

(15) S2: Well, no, first because I do not have time and second, well, probably because I'm quite used to that (.) to the notion that if it needs to reach me it will reach me and if it doesn't reach me, my classmates (.) I can rely on my classmates to (...) tell me something like have you heard of this or have you heard of that and if not (.) then maybe it is not something directed directly for me.

They both shared the concern that there might be some useful information there that they are not able to understand, because of the fact that the emails are sent in a language that they do not know.

When applying to an International Master's Programme, S6 had tried to search information about the application process online. They had not had trouble finding the information in English, but when they tried to ask for further details about something related to the application process, the only answer they received was that the information is available on the university's website. S6 had already read the information that was linked in the reply but felt that the details they were looking for could not be found there and that the question they tried to ask was left unanswered. It is not clear why the question was left unanswered. If it was a language issue, the person trying to answer S6 might not have understood what was meant by the question or S6 could have missed the details when reading the webpage, but it might also have been due to some other reason.

S3 also receives emails that are only in Finnish, even though they say that the majority of the emails are available in English. S3 talks about their experiences in example 16.

- (16) S3: 80 per cent of the time it's available in English. It just says scroll down for English. That probably exceeds my expectations. And then I would say probably 20 per cent of the time it's only in Finnish. I'm having more and more of an idea@ what the emails are about but of course in the beginning I had no idea @@. I would say there is about a twenty-eighty rule.

As can be seen from the example, S3 is not bothered much by the fact that some of their emails come in a language that they do not understand. They say that they were not able to understand anything in the emails that were only in Finnish in the beginning of their studies. S3 says that they are starting to have more of an understanding now, which is probably due to the Finnish courses S3 has taken at the university and the exposure to the language they have had during their time in Finland. Unlike other interviewees who talked about the lack of English language versions when talking about emails, S3 says that their expectations have actually been exceeded. From that it is possible to conclude that S3 had expected that they would be receiving even more emails written in a language that they do not understand.

S7 also brought up the emails that they receive. As presented in example 17, S7 has not experienced issues where the emails from the university have not been available in English, but they have had problems with the emails that they receive from the student organization related to their field of study.

- (17) S7: From the university, they [the emails] are [in English], but my degree is a part of this student organisation which is called Konteksti or something (...) and they only send emails in Finnish.

During the interview S7 expresses annoyance about the fact that the student organization's emails are only in Finnish and think that they should at least be in two languages, Finnish and Swedish. They feel that the information in those emails would be interesting, but do not want to bother their Finnish friends by asking them to translate things for them in order to find out what the content might be.

Overall, the email content that is not available in English was a recurring topic in the interviews, meaning that there is a considerable amount of emails received by the international students which they cannot understand. It is evident from the interviews that the emails in question are ones that have been sent to general mailing lists that reach a wide variety of students. These emails are likely not written with the international students in mind. According to the interviewees, most of them decide to ignore them for the most part, because it would take too much effort to try to figure out what each email is saying.

4.2.2 Online information

As mentioned earlier, a lot of the issues that the students had with the availability of information in English had to do with online contexts. S1 says that sometimes there have been webpages where further information is available only in Finnish. S1 first mentions the problem in example 18 and then elaborates, giving an example of such an issue in example 19.

(18) S1: So WebOodi is fine, I think in WebOodi you find everything in English. With the university sites I do have trouble sometimes because as soon as you click on a link because you want to have more information, its often times that you cannot get it in English and its only available in Finnish.

(19) S1: We recently got an email that was considering some of the requirements, for some classes that were taken in English but that belong to the Faculty of Law master's so to the Finnish master's. The student guide had some information about that but that site was only available in Finnish.

Such issues have also been noticed by S4, who only mentions them briefly in example 20.

(20) S4: Maybe some services or some pages, they say that they are in English, but at one point it switches to Finnish anyhow.

S4 did not feel that the sudden change of language in some of the university's webpages would bother them too much and that they considered it to be normal that it sometimes happens, but they did comment that it is a bit annoying at times. S6 on the other hand had noticed similar issues in the Helka library's online database, as described in example 21.

(21) S6: In general, most of the time I find the information and I find the information in English. But one of the things that's been bothering me lately is the library. The different search platforms they have, sometimes when you look for articles, there are certain parts that are not in English. They are only in Finnish.

S6 considers using the library to be vital to studying and that is why they consider it problematic that some of the online resources are only in Finnish. S6 feels that something should be done about it in order to serve the international students better and that is the main issue that should be improved in regard to availability of English. S6 also mentioned having had similar issues with WebOodi, where sometimes they have only found Finnish versions of something that they have been trying to find.

S7 also remembered trying to look for some information from the university's webpages but could only find it in Finnish and in Swedish, but they could not remember what it had been

that they had been looking for. They had been able to understand some of the Swedish text based on their knowledge of German.

Even though some of the students pointed out issues like these, some of them were still content and did not feel that there would have been any problems involving the online materials, as S5 reports in example 22.

- (22) S5: I mean it's not difficult to find information in English and it's quite easy to use (.) them in English. (---) I think the same information is available in all languages. It's not drastically (...) different. But I think that they provide the same information.

S8 was also happy with the information that they had found when they had been searching information prior to beginning in their programme (example 23).

- (23) S8: It was all organized very well and most of the pages are translated already. It obviously reduces the workload from their part. I think they expect that it needs to be translated. @

The lack of some information was also brought up by S8. S8 had had some trouble with the availability of particular instructions, as described in example 24.

- (24) S8: I'm trying to download a program from the software center or download center. They have a pdf of instructions, but it's only in Finnish, so I'm going to have to find a way to get around that. But that's really once you get down into that kind of advanced level of (...) you need something done administratively that is kind of uncommon, you might see some lack of translation there.

Besides the problem of not finding the particular instructions in English, the interviewee does not recall any other specific issues with something not being translated. S8 also mentions that they have not had any problems related to their university life due to a lack of translations.

4.2.3 University related events and services

As Lau and Lin's (2014) research had shown, events that are held by universities or university related organisations can have an impact on the integration of the international students in an international university setting. While talking about emails that were only in Finnish and in Swedish, S1 also brought up the fact that many of the events organized by the Faculty of Law are not held in English, as described in example 25.

- (25) S1: And also all of the events of the Faculty of Law are not in English. Like even the introduction events that we had were in Swedish and in Finnish rather than in English.

As an international student S1 feels that they cannot participate in them or at least do not get the information about them, because the emails that are supposed to inform the students about

them are not available in English. This opinion concerned the university's or faculty's events in general, but S1 did also have some examples of situations where they felt that the international students were not properly acknowledged. In example 26 they elaborate on such an instance.

- (26) S1: I do remember that entrance event was done by [a person representing the university]. And they asked who is international student and still they spoke in Finnish and in Swedish only. So I do think that there is a problem already.

S1 had felt that even though the presence of international students was recognized, they were still not taken into consideration when the decision to give the speech in Finnish and in Swedish but not in English was made. S2 mentioned another incident, where there was a mandatory event where there was not much content for those who do not understand Finnish or Swedish (example 27).

- (27) S2: There was this one instance during the orientation week, towards the end of it. It was in the Think Corner, it was held by (.) I think the head of the Faculty (.) of Law (...) and it was in Finnish, only. @@ (---) What they did was that they did the greeting in Finnish and in Swedish and then English and it lasted for maybe three minutes. And then they started speaking just solely in Finnish, not even in Swedish.

S2 said that they did not really mind the fact that they had to be there, but there had been a lot of students who disliked the fact that an event that was in Finnish was mandatory for everyone. They had also stayed and listened to the panel discussion that followed, but they did not really understand anything that the people in the panel said. As the events did not come up as saliently in other interviews, there is a possibility that the issues related to the fact that both S1 and S2 are studying in the same programme. However, even if the issue is most relevant to the students in the Faculty of Law, some of the events discussed by S1 were directed to all the students in the university.

One thing that S7 considered to be in need of improvement was their experiences with Unicafe, the restaurants that operate mainly on University of Helsinki campuses and that offer student pricing for their meals. S7 talks about their issues with Unicafe in example 28.

- (28) Interviewer: Please describe some things in the University where the quality of English or the availability of information in English would need improvement.

S7: Unicafe. Everything is in Finnish and even though (...) the information is there is really easy, because it just talks about is food, I would feel (.) better if I could also find information in English, just to be one hundred percent sure (.) because I have some allergies and I can find the ingredient composition from the app. It's in Finnish and I can copy paste and translate

everything. But when I visit the Unicafe, everything is in Finnish and I don't know all the words. So I think it could be better, not just for me but for other students as well.

As can be seen in the example, S7's experience with Unicafe is not problem free. Because of their allergies, S7 would need to be sure that the food they eat does not contain certain ingredients. As the full ingredient lists can be found only in Finnish, it makes it difficult for them to be absolutely sure that they can eat the meals that are provided. S7 does not consider this to be a problem that concerns just her but also the students in general. Even though some interviewees mentioned that they consider the language situation in Unicafe is good from the point of view of available information, it is very well possible that they do not have similar dietary restrictions that would force them to focus on such gaps in information.

4.2.4 Availability of courses taught in English

Some of the participants discussed the fact that they would like to participate in some courses that are only taught in Finnish or Swedish. The courses that are a part of the programme that they are studying in are of course in English, because they are meant for international students, but the students felt that they would like or need to take courses that are offered by other programmes. S3 said that in order to study in their programme, there are some knowledge and skills that one is required to have before taking many of the courses (example 29).

(29) S3: I would say, at the university, administratively there's been no issues, but I did probably not contemplate that if I would have to take some basic courses in advance of being able to take some of the courses that I have to take for my graduation that those would be available in English. But actually, those are not. So, I would say that was the first surprise in terms of availability of English.

S3 mentioned some examples such as basic programming skills. Those were not mentioned as requirements when applying to the master's programme, so S3 now needs to find ways to acquire them once they are already studying in the master's programme. The skills and knowledge are taught in the bachelor's level programmes in the University of Helsinki, but since those programmes are usually only aimed for Finnish and/or Swedish speaking students, most of their courses are not available in English. This creates frustration among the international students who have not studied similar courses before and who are not able to take them in the university that they are currently studying at, because of the languages. In example 30, S3 elaborates on the issue.

- (30) S3: For example, last year, I started in a few quote unquote basic master's level courses. I did okay in a few of them, but in some of the other ones there really was a really high expectation of expectation of the knowledge that you had to have in math for example. Or computer science. And so those then I did struggle to find some resources. So, I kind of had to do some hacks.

By 'hacks', S3 means that they have taken courses that are taught in English in some programmes from other fields of study in order to get the skills they need to continue their studies. Regardless of finding some ways to complete those courses they do not expect to be able to graduate in the two-year time frame that the International Master's Programmes are supposed to take, largely due to the fact that there are not enough resources where they could get all the necessary skills before continuing with some of their Master's studies. S3 acknowledges the fact that in order to arrange the courses in English, there would have to be enough students who would take them. But, as he says in example 31 below, he does not consider the amount of student wanting to participate to those courses to be a problem.

- (31) S3: So, I understand all the courses are not available now immediately, because who's going to take them, right? Presumably@, I think a lot of people would take them. Because actually you see when you look inside these courses that are offered, it's not just freshmen. There are a lot of graduate students from other departments actually taking them, which I think is a surprise [to the university]. Which I don't think should be a surprise, I think that's kind of something that is not in the realm of thinking that some graduates do need to be taking these basic courses. And if you look at the computer science class, not even half of them are freshmen. That's how much they are outnumbered by graduate students interested in those. And even in the math class there's three or four from the outside.

When talking about the courses for freshmen, S3 refers to an English-medium Bachelor's programme that has just started for the first time in the fall of 2019. S3 recognizes that the university seems to expect the Master's level students to already have the required skillset, which would mean that the demand for the more basic level courses taught in English would be very small. However, S3's perception is that the demand is actually much higher than the university administration thinks. S3's perception is based on the fact that according to their experience, the freshman level courses in some fields are actually very popular among the students from the Master's programmes.

Another thing that S3 commented on about the availability of English-medium courses was that there are some materials that are taught in much more detail in the Finnish-medium courses than the English-medium courses. S3 gave an example of a course that is available in English that is worth five academic credits, but the same course, where they use the same materials taught in Finnish is worth 15 credits, and that the way it was done in English seemed rushed. In addition to the course availability in English, S3 mentioned that MOOC

(Massive Open Online Course) materials were drastically different in the Finnish and English versions in terms of appearances, functionality and updating, where the Finnish versions are often interactive and visually refined, and the English versions are simpler and not quite as up-to-date. This is not directly a language issue, but it seems to imply that the English versions of the courses that are provided are not getting as much attention as the Finnish ones in terms of development.

Even though S3 was the only one of the interviewees whose main concern was the selection of available English-medium courses, they were not the only one who talked about it. Other students also briefly brought up the fact that the selection of optional courses is more limited to the non-Finnish speaking students in the International Master's Programmes. The fact that Finnish students are able to broaden their knowledge in courses taught in Finnish was discussed by S4, as presented in example 32.

- (32) S4: Some Finnish students that study with me, they might have the opportunity to study some other courses, because some information is only in Finnish, because probably they might (...) those courses might be part of some Finnish master, some other Finnish master's programme.

The reason why S4 feels that the Finnish students have more opportunities to broaden their knowledge is that the Finnish students are not limited to taking only courses that are aimed for international students, since they have an opportunity to participate in courses taught in Finnish.

Sometimes, there have also been some issues with availability of English-medium education even when the courses in question have been supposed to be taught in English, as reported by S9 in example 33.

- (33) There's also if it's not like especially my programme there's like a tendency for lecturers to ask does anyone there need English and then switch to Finnish if no-one there says anything. Which is kind of awkward if the language is in English, so I think that is something that has sometimes not met my expectation. Where I would assume that if you are teaching a course where the teaching language is English that you would be so comfortable to speak English that you don't ask if you could change to your native tongue.

S9 feels that the fact that the course is supposed to be in English should require the teacher to be confident enough in their own English skills that they would not have to ask if they could switch to their mother tongue. S9 feels that their expectations have not been completely met because of that. S9 elaborates that it is an accessibility issue, meaning that if an international student walks into a lesson taught in Finnish they get the feeling that they should not have been there, even though they have the right to participate in the course. S9 thinks that it is

awkward for an international student to ask everyone else to change the language they are using just so that they can participate.

4.2.5 The effect on perceived status of international students

A subject that came up during three interviews even though I did not directly ask about it and that is related to things that have been discussed above, is what the status of international students is in the university. The university presents itself as an international university, which is why some of the interviewees found it to be against their expectations that they do not always feel like they are considered to be a priority. This came up first with S1, who expressed concern that not everyone in the administration of the Faculty of Law seemed to be aware that they have an international programme. They gave an example from the orientation week that took place a year before the interview, when S1 had just begun their Master's studies. The situation was similar to the one S1 talked about earlier, where in a welcoming event the rector had spoken only Finnish and Swedish, even though he had acknowledged the presence of international students. In this other instance someone from the Faculty of Law had asked if there were any exchange students present, after greeting everyone in Finnish and in Swedish. The fact that international students had been acknowledged only as exchange students had made S1 feel like the person talking did not necessarily even know that there was an International Master's Programme. S1 expressed clear disappointment due to the fact that the person was someone who should be aware of what is happening in their faculty.

Another interviewee who talked about the status of the international students was S5. They felt that the fact that they communicated in English instead of Finnish sometimes has a negative effect on how they are treated (example 34).

- (34) S5: Sometimes I would like to complain about student services and like the staff that work in the library. Sometimes they treat you differently, like someone who speaks Finnish fluently wants to get something like a library card or something like that, it's much easier for them. And their communication is much easier for them. It's easier for Finnish students to get what they want.

It would seem that S5 does not feel equal in terms of what kind of service they receive compared to the Finnish students that are studying in the same programme. They elaborated the library card example further (example 35).

- (35) I tried to get a library card and I didn't bring my paper student certificate. And we went with my group mate who is Finnish, and she also didn't have that paper student certificate, but she got her library card. --- I didn't [get the library card, because of the missing document].

S5 had felt that the issue with the library card had been a question of language, because their Finnish speaking fellow student had been able to get the library card while missing the same paperwork as S5. S5 had also felt that they had received poor service from the admissions services and from the student services. They mentioned that it might be because the staff might not be fluent enough and also might not always understand what is being asked from them, but S5 still feels that it puts them in a different position than the Finnish speaking students.

On the other hand, S3 had only positive things to say about the status of international students, as can be seen in example 36.

(36) S3: I've never felt that international students themselves were not a priority. I actually feel that every day it's very much a priority and there is very much resource dedicated to it.

It needs to be noted that this was said in connection to S3 expressing that they think that the availability of English-medium courses would need improvement. They feel that in spite of that, the university is doing well taking the international students into consideration.

S9 also brought up the issue of tutoring. Their experience was that the university and the student organizations had tried to convince the international students to become tutors in order to have English speaking tutors for the international students and because the university wants to be an international university, but the tutor training was not in English. They felt that it reflected many things in the university where students could try to get involved, where most of the information 'on the surface' can be found in three languages but when trying to find more information or to get more involved, most things are handled monolingually in Finnish or bilingually in Finnish and Swedish.

4.3 Prior expectations about English use in the university

Most of the participants mentioned that they had high expectations about the English language both in terms of language quality and the availability of information. The expectations were based mostly on the students' previous knowledge of Finland. The previous knowledge was based on a variety of different things, as discussed below.

Some of them had been to Finland before beginning their studies in the University of Helsinki, which is why their expectations about the English they might encounter had formed through first hand experiences, such as S3 (example 37).

- (37) S3: Having visited ten times before moving here, what I've encountered here, at least in the Helsinki area, the basic level of English is so, so advanced. Especially compared to other countries where I've visited. And even people in the US, who move from other countries, don't necessarily have the level of English as the basic average level of English that one experiences in Helsinki. So, I would say, as a whole for the country I had very high expectations for the level of English. And then, so, after moving here I was not disappointed at all.

Also, some of them already knew people that are from Finland, which is how they already had some experiences communicating with a Finnish person. Some had gained information about Finland from second-hand sources, like YouTube videos or the Newsletter that was sent to the people whose application to the International Master's Programme had been accepted, like S5 mentions in example 38.

- (38) S5: I had information before that the level of English, especially in Helsinki, is quite high and the people speak very good English. I got that information from Newsletters (.) from university and I watched Youtube videos about people travelling in Helsinki and they pretty much said that everyone spoke English and it was super convenient.

The reputation of Finland's education came up in some interviews and that had created the expectation that Finnish people would have high skills in English (see example 39 below) and even though most felt that the expectations about Finnish people speaking English really well had been met, S7 said that their expectations had been a bit unrealistic (example 40).

- (39) S1: I obviously expected a lot from the Finnish teachers at least, because, according to your research, obviously Finnish people are really good in English, which was true. (---) I expected a lot more information available in English which is not the case often times.

- (40) S7: I think mainly because Finland is known for its education system, my expectations were super high and a bit unreal as well.

When talking about how their expectations had been met, S8 mentions that their expectations had been met generally very well. In example 41, S8 discusses the expectations they had coming here as a native speaker of English.

- (41) S8: I expected them to be fluent but I wasn't going to (...) I think that if you can teach and explain things and concepts that are new to me in a foreign language then I know that it was going to be difficult already, like, I expected some sort of co-operation from my part and effort from their part. But it wasn't going to be like my native speaking level of English.

As can be seen from the example, S8 had expected that the teachers at the university would be fluent enough on English to be able to teach in English. Still, S8 did not expect the teachers to communicate in a native level and thus S8 thought that there would be some sort of effort needed from both the teacher and themselves. This can be compared to what S4 said about

“coming half-way” when talking with non-native speakers of English, which S8 had apparently expected to be the way communication would go.

S6 and S7 were the only ones who in the background part of the interviews expressed some concerns about their own English proficiency, which is reflected in the fact that they were the only ones who reported having doubts about their own language proficiency. Before the beginning of their master’s studies in Helsinki, both S6 and S7 had felt unsure about the sufficiency of their own English skills. This was despite the fact that they both had had to deliver evidence of their language skills. S6 had completed their previous university studies in English, which the university accepted as proof of their sufficient skills in the language. S7 had proved their language skills by doing an IELTS (International English Language Testing System/Neither) test. Despite their doubts, neither of them had any trouble once they began their studies. S7 mentions that their expectations of having to struggle when using English was likely caused by the experiences they had had in their previous studies, where the atmosphere had been more formal than the atmosphere in the University of Helsinki. Because of that, S7 had expected that they would have to express themselves in a formal way, which as a non-native speaker of English might be difficult sometimes. S7 mentioned that the communication that they received from the University of Helsinki after being accepted, including the newsletter for new international students and some other communications from their department, had put them at ease about their doubts of their own English skills, because they had not been too complicated for them to understand.

When considering the native speakers of English as a group, S3, S8 and S9, all of them reported that they had expected the quality of English in University of Helsinki to be either good or very good and all of them reported that those expectations had been met. S3 had visited Finland many times before enrolling, so they were relying on their own experiences, but they expected that the quality of English would be very high compared to other countries they have visited. S9 had previous experiences about studying in a Spanish speaking country as an exchange student and there they had had to know Spanish, because the language of instruction was not English. They expected things to be different in terms of required language skills in the University of Helsinki (example 42).

- (42) S9: I guess my expectation was that the level of English would be pretty comfortable, because it's an English speaking programme. --- Here, I was like, no one is going to expect me to know Finnish. --- I expected there to be, like, at least a pretty general level of English.

S9's expectation of 'pretty general level of English' could be seen as them expecting to encounter good enough English that would allow them to understand what is being taught. Compared to S8, S9's comments would suggest that they were also not expecting that the English used in the university would match their native level of English but would still be good enough in the sense that the content of the lectures would be understood.

Overall, it can be summarized that the interviewees had all expected that they would be able to complete their studies comfortably using English as the language of communication in the university. Those expectations had been met for the most part in terms of the quality of English, but there had been some issues described in the previous sections that have been causes of frustration among the international students.

5 Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to provide information on what it is like to study in the University of Helsinki in English-medium programmes and what kinds of language issues the students who do not speak Finnish or Swedish encounter. My research was done in order to find the answers to the research questions about what kind of English do international students encounter when they study in the University of Helsinki, what kinds of experiences have the international students had regarding the availability of information or services provided in English and what expectations did the international students have about English in the university before entering the university and how have they been met

In the following sections, I will discuss the issues reported by the informants by summarizing what were the main things said about them. I will also discuss the implications of what has come up in my study. In the last section of this chapter, I will discuss the limitations of this study and my suggestions for future research.

5.1 Quality of English in the university

As discussed in chapter two, the perceived quality of English the students encounter in the university can have an effect on how they perceive the quality of teaching in general. If the students considered the teachers' English skills to be less than sufficient, they would likely start questioning the level of education they are receiving, especially if the quality of English is found to be less than sufficient in the lectures (Jensen et al 2013). From the answers given by the interviewees, it seems that at least in some places Finland has gained reputation as a country where the level and quality of education are high and where most people would speak good English. Taking into account what the interviewees said, the quality of English used in the university does not seem to be a major concern in the University of Helsinki. Most of the students did not report being disappointed with the quality of English they had faced in the university. Even when the students did not consider the English of the teachers or other university staff members to be completely fluent, they reported being able to communicate with them without any party having problems in understanding, which is in line with the results of Björkman's study (2013). There seems to be some variation though. Some of the students reported having no issues at all and S8 said that they do not even feel like they are studying in a place where English is not an official language. In contrast, some reported there having been some issues that caused difficulty, such as some teachers whose English is not

that easy to follow, which came up in the interviews of S7 and S9. Even though it seems that those negative experiences are in a minority in my data and that many of the students reported most of the teachers having no problems in their English, it is still noteworthy that some of the students do feel that they have trouble following teaching because the teacher's communication in English is not clear enough for them. Even though the issue of not being able to follow instruction properly is only reported by a couple of my interviewees, it should not be undermined. Having even one teacher whose English is not easily understandable might have a negative effect on their studies and make their experience studying in the University of Helsinki less enjoyable.

One thing that no-one reported to be a problem was the quality of English in the university's webpages or other online materials. Some interviewees did say that it is possible to see that the texts are not written by native speakers of English, but they did not see that as a major problem. They considered it to be understandable and even expected in a country where English is not an official language. This would again indicate that international students expect to be studying in an ELF environment, because they care more about understanding the English than about the speaker being perfectly precise.

5.2 Availability of English in the university

As discussed in chapter four, the most salient issues that were reported by the interviewees in this study were about the availability of English in the university. Even the students who reported having no problems with the quality of English in the university had faced situations where the information provided was available only in Finnish or Finnish and Swedish. More than one reported to be receiving emails that came through the faculty they were studying in or from the related student organizations that were not available in English. This seemed to be something that irritated at least S1, S2 and S9. Some seemed to be fine with receiving emails that they did not understand, since they considered that they were not that frequent and that they would still be getting all the information that concerns them. The issue seems thus to be more evident in some faculties or student organizations than others. S3, who studies in the Faculty of Science, is satisfied with the availability of information in English in the emails that they receive, whereas S1 and S2, who both study in the Faculty of Law, said that they did not understand a lot of what they receive. This indicates that there are likely more emails sent that do not include English in the Faculty of Law's mailing lists than in the Faculty of Science's mailing lists. The reason for this difference is likely to be due to a difference in the

amount of international programmes, as the Faculty of Law only has two International Master's Programmes and the Faculty of Science has multiple International Master's Programmes and also one Bachelor's programme in science that is taught fully in English. Thus, the relative and the total amount of international students in the two faculties differs considerably, which is then reflected in how much the people sending messages to their mailing lists take international students into account.

It could be argued that if the information needed to reach the international students, it would be in English and if not, then Finnish and Swedish would be enough. That seems to be what the informants themselves sometimes think, as some of them do not bother trying to read the emails that are not in a language they can understand. But it does still leave the chance of them missing out on important information or interesting events, because it is probable that some of the people sending the emails have just not thought that the message they are sending might concern people who do not speak Finnish or Swedish. It can also cause uncertainty to the international students receiving these emails, since they cannot be certain that they do not need to know what they contain, whereas translating each one would require a lot of effort and a lot of it would still not be relevant information. It is understandable that since there is likely to be a lot of information in those emails that does not concern the international students, translating all of it could be seen as a waste of resources. It would still be good if the international students could be taken into consideration when sending those emails to mailing lists that reach all of the students in the faculties. A simple disclaimer in English informing the students what it is about and who it concerns would be sufficient in many cases, relieving the international students of the stress of trying to decide whether or not they are supposed to know what the message says.

The general opinion that was repeated by many of the interviewees was that the information that the students can access online is usually available in English, but that the availability weakens when trying to find further information. This means that in situations where something is introduced or the basics of it are explained, it usually is available in three languages. However, when trying to find out more, the information is found only in Finnish or bilingually in Finnish and in Swedish. There were also mentions of webpages that are in English only in part and have some information in Finnish that has not been translated. This would suggest that the international students have been taken into consideration in most areas, but that there is still a lot of translation work that is yet undone. It could be that it is a

conscious decision by the administrative personnel at the university in order to save resources. The reasoning behind this might be that providing the most basic information is enough to help the international students get as far as they need to on their own and if they require further knowledge, they would be helped by the student services or other relevant instances. This can sometimes be true, if the students are informed of where they can get help in case they need further information. Even then, it would require resources from the instances that are helping them. It can also seem unprofessional if the English versions link to webpages that are only available in Finnish or if the English version has parts that have not been translated from Finnish into English.

One issue that was not directly about the availability of information in English was the fact that some of the students thought that they did not have as many opportunities as their Finnish peers. This was due to the fact that there are courses that they would like to participate in but cannot, since they are only available in Finnish. This is of course a question of resources. One could argue that since the courses that are directly a part of the programme that they are studying in are provided in English and that the ones not provided in English would be completely optional for them it is not necessary to offer the optional courses in English. But at least in the case of S3, the issue that they brought up was not just the fact that they would like to participate in those courses, but that in order to study in their programme they need to be able to acquire the information provided in those courses through some means. Their suspicion was that there would be a lot of participants for those courses among the international student population, if they were available in English. S3 also pointed out that in the field of computer science, the information develops constantly and that knowledge about any programming language from ten years ago would be outdated and thus there likely would be a need for some of the students to brush up on their basic skills. Not being able to develop those skills or having to go to another faculty in order to receive that information can make it difficult for a student to proceed in their studies. This is the case for S3, who is not going to graduate from the Master's programme because they need to develop their skills outside the programme.

Interestingly the status of international students inside the university came up in three interviews, even though I did not directly ask about it. This would indicate that the interviewees perceive the university's investment into developing English-medium teaching and services provided in English to be related to how much of a priority the university

considers the international students to be. Even though S1 and S5 felt that the international students would be less of a priority, S3 had a completely opposite view. Their perception was that the university has made them feel like a very high priority, which would indicate that S3 considers that the Faculty of Science serves their international students very well. However, it is still alarming that S1 and S4 implied that they feel like they are in some way unequal compared to the Finnish students. Their experiences indicate that not everyone in the university takes multilingualism into consideration in their work. It is very unlikely that anyone in the university would knowingly discriminate against the international students, but there might be people who are not aware that they should be making more diverse language decisions. This is also related to what S9 said about some teachers wanting to switch into Finnish when teaching an English-medium course to a group that consists mostly of Finnish students. It seems more likely that the teachers have seen it as an issue of convenience than it being a decision that is made to exclude international students. The teachers might just be more comfortable or confident giving lectures in their own mother tongue. Even if the reasoning behind these type of language choices are practical and not in any way meant to be discriminative against the international students, they still might give the impression that the non-Finnish students are somehow less important or less welcome.

5.3 Prior expectations

Most of the interviewees reported to having high expectations when enrolling to the University of Helsinki, meaning that they expected the people at the university to have a good proficiency in English and they expected the quality of English as an instruction language to be good. The expectations were formed from prior knowledge, personal experiences or information provided by the University of Helsinki in their Newsletter for the new international students. When S8 commented on having expected that there would be some co-operation required from their part in terms of communicating with the non-native English speakers at the university, they clearly had an idea of what it might be like to communicate in ELF situations. By co-operation, they likely meant adapting to the way of communicating that differs from their native use of English, which fits the definition of ELF that I presented in the beginning of chapter two. Usually the interviewees said that their expectations had been met, even though there had been some issues and at some instances the standards had not been quite as high as they would have hoped for them to be. The experiences that have not lived up to the expectations were mostly about the availability of information provided in English.

Even though the specific instances where the issues have come up might not seem like major issues on their own, if the students keep encountering them, they might feel that the language environment is not quite what they were thinking it would be.

Judging by the interviews, the information that the applicants and people whose applications have been accepted receive from the university has an effect on what kind of language environment they expect to encounter when they arrive. The fact that the interviewees' reported that their expectations have been mostly met means that the Newsletter sent to the new international students does not create unrealistic expectations. It is positive that while the University of Helsinki sets high expectations in regard to the quality and proficiency of English used there, those expectations are also likely to be met.

5.4 Implications of this study

The analysis of the interviews has shown me that even though the quality of the English used in the University of Helsinki is generally good, there are still some issues that need to be properly addressed. The students interviewed for this thesis did not raise concerns about not being able to complete their studies because of these issues, but the mentioned issues make the students feel less comfortable and less included at times.

In regard to teaching in English, I believe that the university should provide the teachers with support when needed. This could mean measures such as providing possibilities to brush up on their English skills through courses or through having someone available who the teachers could discuss the subjects with in English. Even though the language policy does call for this kind of support, there needs to be enough actions taken to make sure that the teacher's English use gets sufficient attention and support from the university's side. The suggested measures would be taken to ensure that both quality and availability match the expectations of the students and the standards that are set in the university's language policy. The teachers need to have the confidence to teach in English whenever they are teaching a course that is targeted for the international students. And even though many of the students that I interviewed do not care if the English that their teachers were speaking was not what they would consider perfect English, there were some issues of not being able to fully understand the lecturer's speech. It is clear that if there are people teaching in English who are not proficient enough to be able to communicate effectively, then there should be something done about that. It is not necessary to aim for a teaching staff in which everyone would have native-like proficiency, but their

English does need to be comprehensive without much effort required from the students. It is also stated in the University of Helsinki Language Policy that the students in English-medium programmes would also get language and communication support (University of Helsinki, 2014, 11). This was not discussed with the interviewees, but some of them did mention that they had had trouble understanding and communicating the subjects in English, so there might be need for subject-specific language support.

The common denominator for all the discussed availability issues seems to be the fact that multilingualism has not been taken into consideration. The emails, webpages and other pieces of information that are offered only in Finnish or Swedish are likely written with the assumption that everyone who wants or needs to read them are going to understand those languages. For example, it is very likely that people who send emails that are only in Finnish, think that the information in there would only concern the Finnish speaking recipients. If the information is about a course taught in Finnish or events that are only in Finnish, translating it into other languages might not seem worthwhile. However, when an international student receives such an email or comes across a webpage with the information only in languages they do not understand, they cannot be certain that the information there would not be necessary for them to know. Thus, they have to either ignore the information in Finnish or Swedish and trust that if they do need to get some information it will reach them some way or another, or they need to try to translate some of the Finnish or Swedish text in order to get an idea of what the text is about. Both options are problematic. Ignoring the texts that are not written in a language they understand might lead to them missing out on something that they should have known, but due to not taking the international students in consideration, has not been provided in English. Also, ignoring is not an option when searching for some information that they would need or want to have. Then again, trying to translate even parts of every email or every webpage that might seem useful will take so much time and effort that it might not be a viable option for everyone. Therefore, there would be a need for some kind of disclaimer or other similar solution that would simply let the reader who does not understand the language(s) used know that the text is not relevant for them. If the text actually does seem like it could be relevant to people who do not speak Finnish or Swedish, then the possibility of translating it or at least providing a brief summary of the information in it in English should be considered. When the issue is a service that is not provided in English, whether it is provided online or in person, the fact that multilingualism is not taken into consideration might be a matter of resources. However, the international students are entitled to receiving

the same information and services as everyone else, so at least the most crucial services like the library or IT-support helpdesk should be provided fully in all three languages of the university.

The issue of student organisations not providing all of the information in languages besides Finnish is something that seemed to bother some of the interviewees. From the point of view of a new student, the student organisations can be seen as possibilities for integration, by getting to know other students from the faculty and similar fields of study or interests. It is thus understandable that a new international student who wants to get to know more about how the student organisations work and what kinds of activities and events they organise would get frustrated if that information is not available in any language that they would understand. Seeing that the student organisations are usually mostly run by the students themselves, it can be an issue that will be hard to solve. It would require effort from the student boards to decide how the information would be translated from Finnish and who would be doing it. Considering that the boards usually operate on voluntary basis and they have very limited budgets, it might seem too big of an effort. I would still suggest that they would consider it and that the faculties should be encouraging them to provide at least the basic information about themselves and their events in all of the three languages of the University of Helsinki, or at least in English in addition to Finnish, because it is a language that most students will understand. The reason I say this is that I think that every student has a right to be an active member of the student body and to feel included. Therefore, as the student organisations aim to be there for all of the students, taking language diversity into consideration is an important part of this inclusion. Another related part would be tutoring in English. Many international students would probably like to have the opportunity to receive tutoring in English. Thus, tutor training should be provided in English.

All of the above is a part of what in the end totals up to how the international students feel about their position in the University of Helsinki compared to the Finnish students. As students, they deserve to feel equal and they deserve to have equal opportunities as the Finnish students when it comes to their studies or their possibilities of being involved in the academic community. Not all of the issues can be easily fixed and some of them involve limited resources or other influencing issues but taking the multilingualism into consideration when making language decisions in the university would be something that everyone working in the university should keep in mind.

The international students come to the University of Helsinki expecting to be able to complete their studies in English and also to communicate in English in the university. The university is an active participant in the formation of those expectations because of what they communicate to potential applicants and new accepted students. The University of Helsinki of course wants to communicate that it is a good option for studies in English. If the students feel that the expectations that they have had of the university are met, it might even contribute positively on the reputation of the University of Helsinki as a place of study.

5.5 Limitations of the study and possibilities for future research

Having nine students from five different faculties participating in my interviews allowed me to have a good variation in of my data. Through these interviews I was able to get many different viewpoints on different aspects of the academic life of an international student studying in the University of Helsinki. However, qualitative interviews are always representations of the thoughts and experiences of individuals and should be treated as such. The analysis provides insights into what those individuals have experienced and even though many themes were recurring, they cannot be considered as representations of the state of the university as a whole. Not all the faculties and International Master's Programmes were represented, meaning that they might have some issues of their own that this thesis is not able to shed light on. Also, as individuals, the interviewees all have different things that they care about, and they all have different strategies on how to cope with difficult language situations. Because of that, what some might consider insignificant might come across as a major issue in the interview data and what some might point out as the main problem in their academic progress, some might brush off as expectable and normal.

As far as future research about these topics goes, I would suggest that these topics could be studied also in other organizations providing higher education in Finland. The different organizations could learn from comparing the results and it might even allow collaboration on how to improve the overall experiences of international students. Another possibility for future research is to do a larger scale survey about the topics that have been highlighted by this thesis. The survey could study the overall satisfaction on the quality and availability of English and it could have parts that are designed to bring out what the students feel about the most salient issues in this thesis. It could provide information on whether or not the issues brought up truly are university or faculty wide. It could also show which ones are the issues that the international students truly consider as problems that require fixing and which ones

are mild annoyances at worst. Such surveys would not have to be limited to the University of Helsinki. If the survey were filled out by international students around Finland, it could provide results that would allow comparisons between organizations.

It would also be possible to conduct research that would take a look into what kinds of English can actually be found in the university's context. Possible research methods include doing linguistic landscape research, where the university campuses and other areas such as libraries would be inspected from the point of view of what languages can be found and how are they represented. Also, it could include a look into the online pages and materials as well as observing English-medium teaching in the university. This kind of research would provide factual information about this thesis's subjects and might again point out some areas that would require further looking into.

6 Conclusion

As an international university, the University of Helsinki offers many International Master's Programmes that provide degrees where English is the language of instruction. My study aims to provide a viewpoint into students' perspectives about what kind of English they encounter in the university, what kinds of issues they have had with the availability of information and how their expectations about the use of English have been met. The University of Helsinki's language policy states that in order to participate in the development of the English language as the language of internationalization of academia, the university should provide information also in English and that the quality of language should reflect the high quality of the research and education in the university (University of Helsinki 2014).

Based on what the informants said in the interviews, they seemed to perceive that the quality of the English used in the university matches the standards that are set in the language policy. Even though the students had encountered some problems with the language proficiency of individual teachers, they all considered the English that they encounter in general to be good or at least sufficiently good. None of the native speakers of English that were interviewed expressed any frustration about the quality of language. It was also expressed by some of the interviewees that it is understandable that not everything will be native-like or perfectly precise and that small errors are to be expected.

Regarding the availability of information in three languages, the students had encountered many instances where they consider that the information is not sufficiently available in English. Most of the students had some issues that they would want to have fixed in terms of what languages the information is available in and all of them had encountered at least some things where the information that they were looking for was not available in English. Even though some of the students seemed slightly irritated by this, none of them reported that it would hinder their ability to complete their degree. Providing the international students with enough information and supporting services that they are able to complete their studies should be considered the minimum as far as availability of English is considered. However, in order to be an attractive option for new international students, the university needs to make sure that their time in the university will be a pleasant experience. That means that the students feel welcome and included in the university's academic community. The situations where there is information available only in Finnish and/or Swedish or courses where the international

students feel awkward asking for the teacher to actually give the lectures in English when the language of instruction is supposed to be English will most likely make the international students feel like they are not a priority.

It is clear that if there are Finnish speaking students who are studying in the International Master's Programmes, they will have the opportunity to pick some courses from other programmes that are taught in Finnish, if their curriculum allows it. The international students who do not speak Finnish will have a more limited selection of courses. This is to be expected, but there is still a case to be made about providing EMI courses in addition to the ones that are carried out by the International Master's Programmes. They could be courses that would provide the international students a possibility to brush up on their previous knowledge or to learn knowledge or skills that they would need to be able to obtain in order to participate in the courses that are mandatory in their master's studies. Even though arranging them would require resources, there exists a potential crowd of students that would be interested in taking such courses. Also, the more variation there is provided in the optional courses that the international students can choose from, the better chances they have to actually have control over what they study for their degree. Through a wider selection of courses, the university could be able to serve the international students' needs better, which then could be used to make the University of Helsinki a more attractive option for the people who are making decisions on where to study.

What this study has shown is that when new students from outside of Finland enrol to the University of Helsinki, they expect to come into a learning setting where they do not need to understand the local languages, because they expect that the locals will have a good proficiency in English. This study suggests that it is the case for the most part. There is still work to be done in order to serve the international students better and to make sure they feel included.

References

- Aalto University (2019). *Avaintietoa vuodesta 2018 ja vuosittaiset raportit / Aalto-yliopisto*. [online] Available at: <https://www.aalto.fi/fi/aalto-yliopisto/avaintietoa-vuodesta-2018-ja-vuosittaiset-raportit> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].
- Airey, J., Lauridsen, K. M., Räsänen, A., Salö, L., & Schwach, V. (2017). The expansion of English-medium instruction in the Nordic countries : Can top-down university language policies encourage bottom-up disciplinary literacy goals?. *Higher Education*, 73 (4), 561-576.
- Björman, B. (2011). Pragmatic strategies in English as an academic lingua franca: Ways of achieving communicative effectiveness? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43 (4). 950-964.
- Björkman, B. (2013). *English As an Academic Lingua Franca : An Investigation of Form and Communicative Effectiveness*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Faber 2010. English as an academic Lingua Franca. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses* 23. 19-32.
- Hirvensalo, N. (2012) “*It’s a nice wishing list*”? *Teachers and the language policy: Perspectives on English medium teaching at the University of Helsinki*. Helsinki: University of Helsinki Unpublished MA thesis.
- Jenkins, J. (2009). *World Englishes. A Resource Book for Students*. London: Routledge.
- Jensen, C., Denver, L., Mees, I. & Werther, C. (2013). Students’ attitudes to lecturers’ English in English-medium higher education in Denmark. *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 13(1). 87–112.
- Lau, K. & Lin, C. (2016). Internationalization of higher education and language policy: the case of a bilingual university in Taiwan. *Higher education*, 74(3), pp. 437-454.
- Johnson, D. (2013). *Language Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leppänen et al. (2009). *Kansallinen kyselytutkimus englannin kielestä Suomessa: Käyttö, merkitys ja asenteet*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Lindström, J. (2012). Different languages, one mission? Outcomes of language policies in a multilingual university context. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 216. 33–54.
- Ljosland, R. (2011). English as an Academic Lingua Franca: Language policies and multilingual practices in a Norwegian university. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(4). 991-1004.

- Marsh, D. & Frigols Martín, M. J. (2012). Content and Language Integrated Learning. In Carol A. Chapelle (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Mauranen, A. (2017). Conceptualising ELF. In Jennifer Jenkins, Will Baker and Martin Dewey (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*, 7-24. Abingdon: Routledge
- Mortensen, J. & Fabricius A. (2014). Language ideologies in Danish higher education: Exploring student perspectives. In Anna Kristina Hultgren, Frans Gregersen & Jacob Thøgersen (eds.), *English in Nordic universities: Ideologies and practices* (Studies in World Language Problems 5), 193–223. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Murata, K. & Masakazu I. (2017). EMI in higher education. In Jennifer Jenkins, Will Baker & Martin Dewey (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of English as a Lingua Franca*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Saarinen, T. (2014). Language ideologies in Finnish higher education in the national and international context: A historical and contemporary outlook. In Anna Kristina Hultgren, Frans Gregersen, & Jacob Thøgersen (eds.), *English in Nordic universities: Ideologies and practices* (Studies in World Language Problems 5), 127–146. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Saarinen, T. & Nikula, T. (2013). Implicit policy, invisible language: Policies and practices of international degree programmes in Finnish higher education. In Aintzane Doiz, David Lasagabaster & Juan Manuel Sierra (eds.), *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*, 131–150. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Smit, Ute. (2010). *English as a Lingua Franca in Higher Education: A Longitudinal Study of Classroom Discourse*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Tampere University (2019). *Tampereen yliopiston toimintakertomus ja tilinpäätös vuodelta 2018* [online]. Available at: https://www.tuni.fi/sites/default/files/2019-06/tay_tilinpaaotos_2018_tilintarkastettu_optimized.pdf [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].
- University of Eastern Finland 2018. *Tilinpäätös 31.12.2018* [online]. Available at: <https://www.uef.fi/documents/10184/1493051/Tilinp%C3%A4%C3%A4t%C3%B6s+2018+painoversio.pdf/6c8c9738-b36e-4992-98b6-325cc8c8b8c8> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].
- University of Helsinki (2014). *Language policy of the University of Helsinki: From guidelines to practice: Towards functional multilingualism* [online]. Available at: https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/helsingfors_universitets_sprakprinciper_0.pdf [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].
- University of Helsinki (2019a). *Katsaus vuoteen 2018* [online]. Available at: https://www.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/katsaus_vuoteen_2018.pdf [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

University of Helsinki (2019b). *Master's Programme in Urban Studies and Planning* [online]. Available at: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/admissions/degree-programmes/urban-studies-and-planning-masters-programme> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

University of Helsinki (2019c). *Explore Our International Master's Programmes* [online]. Available at: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/admissions/how-to-apply/international-masters-programmes/explore-our-international-masters-programmes> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

University of Jyväskylä (2018). *Yleisesite 2018* [online]. Available at: <https://issuu.com/universityofjyvaskyla/docs/yleisesite2018> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

University of Turku (2019). *Turun yliopiston vuosikertomus 2018* [online]. Available at: <https://www.utu.fi/fi/yliopisto/vuosikertomus-2018> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

University of Oulu (2019). *Oulun yliopisto lukuina* [online]. Available at: <https://www.oulu.fi/yliopisto/avainluvut> [Accessed 18 Dec. 2019].

Valimaa, J., Fonteyn, K., Garam, I., van den Heuvel, E., Linza, C., Soderqvist, M., Wolf, J.U. & Kolhinen, J. (2013). *An evaluation of international degree programmes in Finland*. Helsinki: Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council.

Appendix 1 – Interview guide

1. Please tell me about yourself and how your time in Finland has been so far.

2. Where are you from originally?

3. What is your educational background prior to coming to Finland?

3.1 Have you studied in English before?

4. What languages have you studied or otherwise learned besides your mother tongue?

5. What programme do you study in?

6. Why did you choose to come to study in Helsinki?

7. When applying to study here in an International Master's Programme, did you have to do a test or otherwise prove your English skills? How did you do it? Did that have some effect on your expectations towards the university or the programme?

8. How would you self-evaluate your own English skills?

9. Before you began your studies here, what were your expectations regarding the English you would face in University? (For example, the level or quality of English you would face, the availability of information in English)

9.1 Please describe how those expectations were formed.

9.2 Did the expectations develop after you applied and were accepted?

9.3 How have those expectations been met?

9.4 Have you received some information from the university prior to arriving?

9.5 Did you search some information yourself?

10. What has studying in English been like in the University of Helsinki?

10.1 Do you feel that the level of teaching has been in any way affected by the fact that it is done in English?

11. What has the communication been like with the university staff? (face-to-face, emails, other)

12. What are your experiences when trying to find information in English online from the university's webpages and other online sources like WebOodi and Guide?

13. The university has a language policy, which states that information should be available in three languages (Finnish, Swedish and English) and that the quality of the language should reflect the high standards of education and research done at the university. How well do you feel those goals have been met from your point of view?

14. Please describe some things in the University where either the quality of English or the availability of information in English would need improvement.

13.1 Have there been moments, when there has clearly been more information available in other languages than English?

15. Is there anything else you would like to say about the subject that has not come up yet?

Appendix 2 – Privacy Notice

**PRIVACY POLICY/NOTICE
FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
EU General Data Protection Regulation
Art. 12–14
Date: 30 September 2019**

Information for participants of the research project “English in the University of Helsinki, from the point of view of international Master’s students”

You are taking part in the research project *English in the University of Helsinki, from the point of view of international Master’s students*. This notice describes how your personal data will be processed in the study.

Participation in the study is voluntary. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate in the study or if you withdraw from the study. For more information on your rights and how you can affect the processing of your personal data, please see the end of this notice.

The research project *English in the University of Helsinki, from the point of view of international Master’s students* involves the processing of personal data. The purpose of this notice is to provide information on the personal data that will be processed, the source of the data and how the data will be used in the study. For more information on the rights of data subjects and how you can affect the processing of your personal data, please see the end of this notice.

1. Data Controller

Riku Hipsi

2. Contact person and principal investigator

Contact person in matters concerning the project:

Name: Riku Hipsi

E-mail: [removed]

3. Description of the study and the purposes of processing personal data

The aim of this research is to find out what kind of English foreign students that come to study in the University of Helsinki have faced in the university and how it compares to their expectations. Collected personal data will be transcribed,

translated (if needed) and stored electronically. Any directly identifiable personal information will be anonymized.

4. Who is carrying out the research?

The research will be carried out by Riku Hipsi for his Master's thesis.

5. Personal data included in the research data

The following kinds of personal data will be collected in the research:

- voice
- educational background
- previous home countries
- language background

6. Sources of personal data

Personal data will be collected by interviewing participants.

7. Sensitive personal data

No data considered as special category data under Article 9 of the General Data Protection Regulation will be processed in the study.

8. Duration of processing

Personal data can be processed two years after Riku Hipsi has graduated from the University of Helsinki Master's programme in English studies (Master of Arts). After that, all material containing personal data will be deleted.

9. Lawful basis of processing

Personal data is processed on the following basis, which is based on Article 6(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation:

☒ performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller:

☒ scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes

☐ archiving of research materials or cultural heritage materials

☐ participant's consent

☐ compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject

☐ legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party

description of the legitimate interest:

If processing is based on the consent of the participant, the participant has the right to withdraw their consent at any time. The withdrawal of consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing based on consent before its withdrawal.

10. Recipients of the personal data

Personal data will not be transferred to anyone else.

11. Transfer of personal data to countries outside the EU/European Economic Area

No personal data will be transferred to recipients outside the European Economic Area.

12. Automated decisions

No automated decisions with significant effects on the participants are made in the study.

13. Safeguards to protect the personal data

The personal data is processed and stored in such a way that only persons who need the data for research purposes can access them.

Personal data processed in IT systems:

☒ username ☒ password ☐ logging ☐ access control ☐ encryption
☐ other:

How data in physical format (e.g. paper) is protected: papers containing participant's personal data will be archived lockable spaces

Processing of direct identifiers:

☐ The data is collected without direct identifiers
☒ Direct identifiers will be removed in the analysis phase
☐ The material to be analysed includes direct identifiers.

14. Retention of personal data after the completion of the study

☒ The research material will be deleted
☐ The research material will be archived:
☐ without identifiers ☐ with identifiers

15. Your rights as a data subject, and exceptions to these rights

The contact person in matters concerning the rights of the participant is the person mentioned in section 1 of this notice.

Rights of data subjects

According to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), data subjects have the right

- of access to their data
- to rectification of their data
- to the erasure of their data and to be forgotten
- to restrict the processing of their data
- to data portability
- to object to the processing of their data
- not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing.

Not all of these rights can be exercised in all situations, depending on factors such as the basis for the processing of personal data.

For more information on the rights of data subjects in different situations, please see the Data Protection Ombudsman's website:

<https://tietosuoja.fi/en/what-rights-do-data-subjects-have-in-different-situations>

Exceptions to data subject rights

Under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Finnish Data Protection Act, certain exceptions to the rights of data subjects can be made when personal data is processed in scientific research and fulfilling the rights would render impossible or seriously impair the achievement of the objectives of the processing (in this case, scientific research).

The necessity of exceptions to the rights of data subjects will always be assessed on a case by case basis.

Right to lodge a complaint

You have the right to lodge a complaint with the Data Protection Ombudsman's Office if you think your personal data has been processed in violation of applicable data protection laws.

Contact details:

Data Protection Ombudsman's Office (Tietosuoja-valtuutetun toimisto)

Address: Ratapihantie 9, 6th floor, 00520 Helsinki

Postal address: B.O. Box 800, 00521 Helsinki

Tel. (switchboard): 029 56 66700

Fax: 029 56 66735

E-mail: tietosuoja(at)om.fi

Appendix 3 – Consent form

Consent form

Project title: English in the University of Helsinki, from the point of view of international Master's students

Investigator: Riku Hipsi

This consent form is for taking part in the English in the University of Helsinki, from the point of view of international Master's students –study (investigator Riku Hipsi). In the following text, I will describe the aims and procession of my research. Please read the following information, do not hesitate to ask if you need clarification, and consider if you have the possibility to take part in this study.

Purpose of the research

The aim of this research is to find out what kind of English foreign students that come to study in the University of Helsinki have faced in the university and how it compares to their expectations.

Data collection and participation

The data for this research will be collected by interviewing foreign students who are currently studying in some international master's programme, who do not know Finnish or Swedish and have come to Finland to study in the University of Helsinki.

The participation is voluntary and the participants are free to withdraw at any time.

Anonymity and data storage

The interview will be audio recorded, and the recording will be transcribed, translated (if needed) and stored electronically. Passages from the transcripts can be used in the master's thesis. Your identity as an informant will be protected: any documents labelled with your name or personally-identifying information will be anonymized.

Participant's Permission

I have read the consent form and conditions of this study. I have had the opportunity to discuss the consent form with the investigator. Any questions I have about this research have been answered to my satisfaction. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

Please choose the specific conditions of your participation below by selecting the options and sign the form.

- I will take part in the interview.

☐

Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____

If you have any further questions about this study, please contact:

Riku Hipsi
[email removed]